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October 11, 2006

Ms. Elleanor Daub
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 1105
Richmond, Virginia 23218

RE: Proposed Use Attainability Analysis (UAA) Study
Straight Creek, Lee County

Dear Ms. Daub:

This letter is to acknowledge the support of the Virginia Mining Association for the proposed UAA study for Straight Creek and its tributaries in Lee County, Virginia. Having personal knowledge of the condition of this stream, as well as the current and historic factors impacting said stream, this study is needed, and long overdue.

I think that if such a study were to be conducted for many of the streams in the Coal Counties of Virginia, you will find similarities in topography, historic uses (as opposed to designated use), and current uses. The practices utilized by our forefathers in building the coal camps, which subsequently became the towns and communities we recognize today, and the mining techniques of the times, did nothing to protect or preserve our streams. As a result, we can make improvements to the streams, but achieving a goal of all streams supporting the uses of primary contact recreation, aquatic life, wildlife, and the production of fish and/or shellfish for marketing is not realistic in all streams/waterways. This has recently been demonstrated by the Chesapeake Bay UAA, which identified uses, or tiers of uses, the Bay is capable of supporting. We feel that the non-Bay watersheds should be afforded the same opportunity to evaluate their capability to support their current designated uses, and if found lacking, to propose achievable goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed UAA study. Should you have any questions, please contact me at the above address, or by telephone at (276) 679-4211, cell is (276) 393-1285



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